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Khaddafy: 'The CIA is out to get me'

In his first interview since the midair confrontation Aug. 19 between Libyan aircraft and fighters of the American 6th Fleet over the Gulf of Sidra, Libyan leader Moammar Khaddafy tells the West German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, how he plans to deal with "American imperialism." He asserts that the CIA was behind a recent alleged assassination attempt against him, and calls President Reagan "an unsuccessful, third-rate actor."

Der Spiegel—Colonel Khaddafy, in the West, especially in America, you are regarded as the most dangerous man in the world. Do you think that is justified?

Khaddafy—It depends on what you mean by dangerous.

Q—What the Americans mean by that is really dangerous. They are convinced that you, next to the Russians, are the worst evildoer of all and the one who is behind all the uproar, especially here in Africa. On top of that is the fact that you have threatened to attack American bases in the Mediterranean, even at the risk of unleashing an international catastrophe and a third world war, if the American 6th Fleet once again enters the Gulf of Sidra off the Libyan coast.

A—I can tell you why America calls me the most dangerous man. It is part of the political and psychological preparations for the conquest of Libya. America intends to attack Libya and bring it under its domination again.

Q—So you don't believe that in Reagan's scenario you are merely the bad cowboy with the black hat? You really seriously maintain that the Americans intend to attack and conquer Libya?

A—That is my opinion.

Q—This is a very grave allegation. How do you visualize the conquest of Libya taking place?

A—There are various methods, but they all have the same aim of subduing Libya and incorporating it in the American sphere of influence again. To do this, a direct occupation of the country with troops is not necessary. It is enough to overthrow the revolutionary regime and replace it with another pro-American regime. That is one method of American imperialism and that is what I meant when I spoke of America's plans for conquest.

Q—Is that what you were thinking of in the recent speech in which you spoke of an attempt to poison you?

A—Of course, the Americans were behind that. To attain their ends they must get rid of me. This base plot, worked out by the American president with his CIA, to get me out of the way, was a further step in the direction of getting Libya into their hands.

Q—It is a fact that the American press early in August reported an operational plan of the CIA aimed at removing you from office. This plan was said to have been proposed before the Select Committee on Intelligence, after it had been approved by CIA chief (William) Casey and the crisis-management team of the White House. Members of the committee are said to have sent an indignant protest to Ronald Reagan because it appeared to them that your assassination was planned. However, there was no talk of poisoning. What do you know about all this?

A—The signs only became clear to me afterward. Shortly before these plans were disclosed, many American visitors came to me, as journalists, as businessmen, as politicians. They all suddenly found they had a great interest in speaking to me. Only later did I discover that this was all organized by the CIA with the purpose of discovering my daily living habits, where I sleep, where I eat, what I do.

I also had tips from America, from friends of Arab origin who have become American citizens and who perhaps have worked more or less for the CIA or were supposed to be recruited by them. These persons had noticed that the CIA was becoming more active in the direction of Libya. They let me know that information had been obtained about my eating habits. They warned me that I should have all food and drink tested.

I did not take these reports seriously at the time because I did not think that America would pursue such a base plot with the participation of its president.

The campaign against me and against my policy became stronger. I was said to be behind every act of terrorism and responsible for all evil deeds that happened in the world. When they saw that they were not getting very far with their plan to poison me, they suddenly decided to close our People's Bureau (embassy) in Washington, ordered the personnel to leave the country, and broke with us completely. Following that, they tried to slip one across me in the Sidra.

Q—That sounds to our ears, of course, like a cops and robbers story. But, unfortunately, one has to admit that the CIA plans for getting rid of Fidel Castro, the full details of which became known some years ago, also sounded like one. They planned to get Castro by using poisoned bootlaces or poisoned cigars.

A—Those are facts that cannot be denied. It is also a fact that they tried to kill me.

The CIA has Martin Luther King on its conscience, it has [Chilean leader Salvador] Allende on its conscience, it has [Congo's Patrice] Lumumba on its conscience. Why should they recoil from having me on their conscience?

Q—We cannot agree with that list, but a lot is possible in the CIA and that is something that worries even the American public. We in Europe, for our part, are equally shocked that you threatened to attack the American 6th Fleet if it turns up in the Gulf of Sidra again. Have you not lost all sense of proportion?

A—Nonsense. What I wanted to say was that some formations of this fleet carry atom bombs. If the Americans attack us in the Gulf of Sidra, I must reckon that they will also attack us with atom bombs.

In that case I have the right to defend my people and my country by attacking the NATO bases in southern Europe or the ships from which these atom bombers start before they can reach us. If we have the chance of destroying these bases or ships, we should do so.

Q—Are you really determined to attack American or NATO defense base in Greece, Italy, or Spain?

A—Understand me correctly. I did not say I wanted to attack Greece, Italy, or Spain. I said if I discover that an American attack is being made from these bases and I have the

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possibility of taking these bases out, I would not hesitate to destroy them.

Q—But frontier differences such as yours concerning coastal water limits exist all over the world, between China and Russia, Japan and Russia, China and India. Yet no one up to this date has threatened to cause an international catastrophe over them. You are the first.

A—We are not a neighbor of America! We have no frontier differences with them. Nor do we have a conflict over sea limits. We regard the action of the Americans in the Gulf of Sidra as an act of naked aggression. The Americans had no right to be there. We are not their neighbor. Therefore we do not accept the term "frontier conflict."

Q—It concerns the observation of a 3-mile or a 12-mile zone that has always been respected by the Americans. Outside this zone the Americans were in international waters.

A—That is not true. We have not extended the coastal waters limit to 12 miles. For us the Sidra is a security zone. I do not want to commit myself as to how far in front of our coasts this limit runs. But I tell you the Sidra Gulf is a non-negotiable part of the land of Libya. Whoever pushes his way in here is threatening us. This area is indispensable for our security. That is where we have our factories and our industries. That is where our oil terminals lie from which we supply the whole world with oil.

Whoever goes into the Sidra Gulf must know that he is treading on Libyan territory. Whoever goes into the Sidra Gulf has declared war on us. That applies not only to the Americans but to everybody, no matter who they are.

Q—You have said you would even take the risk of world war. This is an earnest question. Can you yourself imagine that you would be guilty of causing the third world war?

A—Since when has a person who defends his own country been regarded as one who unleashes wars? If we accept that, no man can ever defend his country. I don't want war, I only want to defend my country. If the Americans have a conflict with me and maintain I am in the wrong, why don't they go to the United Nations, or the World Security Council, or the International Court of Justice, or the Conference on the Law of the Sea?

Q—Why did you not go to the United Nations or appeal to the World Security Council when the Americans entered the Gulf of Sidra?

A—America does not need the Gulf of Sidra. I cannot understand why America has cast itself in the role of world policeman and decided to make an example of the Sidra Gulf. But I can assure you that after this attack I feel myself much stronger in my country and my regime is more consolidated than before. I was supported by the whole of Arabia. Eighty states have officially approved and supported my demands.

I can also tell you that official letters have been received from Greece, Italy, France, and many West European states assuring me that I am in the right and saying they could not understand why America was playing with fire in this way. Many European countries have even assured me officially that they accept and recognize the Sidra Gulf as a security zone for Libya.

It seems to me that America and some of its allies are so dim and stupid that they have learned nothing from history. Gamel Abdel Nasser only became a hero when the West Europeans made war against him on the Suez Canal in 1956.

If they want to make me hero of the Arabs, then the

Americans should carry on as they are doing. I have nothing against it. On the contrary, I welcome it.

Q—Then the next conflict seems to be programmed already because, as a maritime nation, America will insist on its definition of sea limits. What political lessons have you learned from this confrontation? Will you have to reorient your alliance policy? Little Libya cannot hope to face the 6th Fleet alone. Do you want to get closer to the Soviets now?

A—It is not necessary to run to the Soviets and ask for protection against the Americans. The question is not whether I can beat America. What I want to make clear is that one must not give way if one is in the right. But in any case we have military power and even if we cannot defeat America they shouldn't imagine it would be a cake walk for them.

Q—When Ronald Reagan became President, you said you were happy that the "naive" and "ignorant" Carter was gone and you welcomed Reagan as a more serious man. You have probably changed your opinion about him now?

A—Naturally it was not the person of Reagan I preferred so much as the Republican Party and its program.

Q—That is surprising because Reagan stood for an anti-socialist, powerful armaments policy.

A—You are right, but I cannot imagine that Reagan will be able to keep his armaments program going for long. The democracies are really demagogues. There are many promises that turn out later to be empty ones.

Q—In your last speech you called President Reagan an unsuccessful, third-class actor. Have you ever seen him in a film?

A—Yes, on Libyan television. We showed his films on TV because we couldn't believe it was true that such a man was President of America. We rolled about laughing. We keep repeating his films to amuse our people.

I have nothing against anyone exercising his profession if it is honest and honorable. What I say is that as an actor Reagan was unsuccessful and third-class so that he has an inferiority complex that he seeks to compensate for it by stupid and incalculable actions.

Q—In America, your actions are likewise attributed to an inferiority complex.

A—I am not a third-class actor. I have tradition, I have roots. I am a revolutionary. I have made a revolution. Reagan embodies nothing more than the peak of a capitalist, rotten society in which everyone is ready to make any promise so long as he is elected.

Q—You have called on the Arabs to destroy the Israeli atom research center in Dimona in revenge for the Israeli attack on the Iraqi reactor in Baghdad.

A—I am against the manufacture of atomic weapons anywhere in the world. That is why I say the Dimona plant must be destroyed. I am convinced that the Israelis already have the bomb. They will not allow the International Energy Authority or anyone else to carry out an inspection. Therefore, they must have something to hide.

Q—Can you visualize that one day, for reasons of policy, you would come closer to America again?

A—Naturally. We have always said that we were ready if the interests of both sides are respected, but not at our cost alone. I repeat, I don't want to live in enmity with America, but neither do I intend to crawl before them. The Americans are playing with fire by pushing their fleets all over the place. I appeal to the American people to stop their president playing with fire.

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